MINECRAFT STORY MODE

rewrite

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Book 4: A Block and a Hard Place (Part II)

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◦●●⦿✿ Chapter 1: Here We are! The Farlands.. ✿⦿●●◦

The team lumbered down the dark hallway, each one of them having their own personal doubts. Despite this, they knew they had to keep on going. The world's fate was resting on their shoulders and it's up to them to save it. Although it may sound simple, the truth couldn't be any more different. Once the team had gotten past the hallway, they spotted a large maze waiting on the other side for them. It was huge and immense and it seemed to be the only way to get across.

"Is this.. a maze?" Olivia observed, however she sounded confused.

"It would appear so. A massive one, from the looks of it," Soren confirmed. "If Ivor used the Command Block to build this, it could hold unspeakable peril."

"So unless we possess a direct guide for the world's most dense maze, I don't believe we should wander inside," Chris suggested. "It seems irrational."

"Unfortunately, this seems to be the only way forward," Soren shrugged.

"I think Chris is up to something. Wandering inside without knowing what'll be waiting for us?" Olivia frowned. "There has to be another way. A secret door, or.. I don't know.. some way around."

"How could you be so sure? And even if that's true, where else should we go then?" Jesse challenged.

"Anywhere but in there!"

"I dunno about you Jesse, but I'm done with dealing with monsters," Nikki huffed.

"It was YOUR idea," Jesse scowled. "You just faced the consequences. If Zephyr wasn't here-."

"Yeah, but he WAS."

"Guys, guys. Please," Jess said, interfering with their argument. "Listen, there's no way we're going into some crazy maze that Ivor built to keep people away. We'll find some other way through."

"But-." Jesse started.

"NO buts."

"Best decision you've made all day," Olivia grinned.

Jesse frowned, disagreeing with the decision his sister chose but it didn't matter now. They had to keep moving. As the team figured out an alternative route, Jess couldn't help but to let her mind wander as she stared at the stone walls that made up the maze. It reminded her of BoomTown; the explosions and mayhem replaying in her head. She shivered, almost missing the chaos and destruction the town has to offer. Good destruction. Not bad.

"Ivor NEEDS to take better care of this place," Nikki commented, driving her away from her thoughts. She glanced over, noticing her younger sister observing one of the many broken walls.

Jess ignored her, instead letting her eyes wander to a couple of poppies and dandelions planted nearby. There weren't many plants anywhere around here, so the presence of the flowers made her a bit confused. "Flowers, but no trees. Guess it's a Farlands thing," she murmured.

"I mean, Soren DID say that logic doesn't really work around here," Nikki shrugged. "What's so important about flowers anyways?"

"Just saying," Jess crossed her arms. "It's still really weird."

As the team continued to find a different way to get across, Zephyr suddenly flew off Nikki's shoulder, squeaking softly to get his owner's attention. He had spotted a couple vines resting on the walls and they seemed to be long enough to allow access to the top of the wall.

"Vines?" Nikki raised a brow.

"It's not just vines," Jess said, pulling on them gently to make sure they were stable enough to climb onto. "Huh. We can probably climb these."

"We'll at least know where we're going," Jess shrugged. "It's better than nothing." Before Jesse could retort, a sudden yelp erupted from the entrance to the maze.

"Everyone, en garde!" Soren shouted. The siblings twisted their heads around, spotting a massive zombie horde coming out of the maze. Gabriel and Soren held their swords, protecting Olivia and Chris while also being ready to attack any zombie that came too close.

"There's too many! We can't fight them all!" Olivia cried. Some of the zombies noticed the siblings and slowly began to make their way towards them as well. As the siblings backed away cautiously, Zephyr swiftly flew above them and screeched loudly. The zombies in response covered their ears to protect their ears from the loud sound and as they were busy, Jesse bolted for the vines. It was their only escape.

"Guys, climb the vines!" He ordered. He didn't need to repeat himself as his sisters followed behind him. Everyone else was on the other side, racing for the vines and began to climb as Zephyr continued to distract the zombies below. The sounds of groans filled their ears as they made their hasty escape. Once everyone was safe, he flew up and joined his owner, flying next to her.

"Well, that worked. I suppose," Soren panted.

"Yeah, I guess," Olivia agreed. Her eyes wandered towards the other side, noticing the siblings were standing there. The gap between them was too big to make a jump and even if they somehow reunited, they didn't know where they should head to next.

"Good job, Zeph!" Nikki beamed as she scratched the back of the ears of her pet EnderBat. Zephyr squeaked contentedly, glad that he was able to help get everyone to safety.

"Yes, we all appreciate your assistance. Zephyr, was it?" Chris said. "But now what? We're all separated!"

Jesse gazed down at the zombies still roaming through the grounds below before gazing over at a house in the distance. He guessed it was Ivor's laboratory, which meant they were going in the right direction. "Let's just head that way and find a place where the paths connect," he figured, gesturing over to the lab sitting at a distance.

"Stay safe, guys!" Olivia called, frowning at the thought of having to go on without her friends but she had no choice.

"You too, Liv!" Jess responded. As she watched as the rest of the team hopped down and disappeared in the maze, her frown deepened. "Sure hope they don't get lost in there.."

The siblings faced the large maze in front of them, a hard pit sitting in their stomachs, realizing the long journey they'd have to make.

"I hope WE don't get lost in there," Nikki gulped.

Without another word, Jesse led his sisters forward. It felt like they were walking forever and not even Zephyr could exactly pinpoint the paths they needed to take to get across the other side. At least there weren't any hostile mobs with them. Or so they thought.

"You guys think that's Ivor's lab?" Nikki commented, breaking the eerie silence between them. She was gazing at the building sitting outside the maze.

"You just noticed it?" Jesse huffed.

"Hey, just asking!"

"Totally would be Ivor's lab. Who else would build a high-tech lab in a whole desolate, isolated, insane place," Jess replied. "Wish it was a little closer though."

"Couldn't Zephyr just teleport us?" Jesse said.

"Yeah, I don't think Zeph could teleport so many people at a time to such a weird place, Jesse," Nikki replied. "I'm pretty sure he's supposed to know the place well too. Right, Zeph?" Zephyr squeaked in response, confirming it. "See?"

"Whatever.." Jesse grumbled.

Without another word, the siblings pressed on. As they did, they peered at a waterfall flowing down freely. It seemed to be coming from nowhere, but what did they exact from a place where logic doesn't exist? Jesse couldn't help but to smile as he peered at it, feeling a wave of deja vu hitting him.

"Hey look, a waterfall!" Nikki observed.

"We first met Reuben near a waterfall like this, remember?" Jesse recalled, remembering the fond memory.

"Yeah.." Jess murmured, a sad smile curling on her face. "I can't believe it's been a year already. Hope the little guy's okay."

"Let's.. keep moving," Jesse said, wanting to focus on the mission. Although he was relieved to collect some old happy memories, he knew that they had to stay focused if they were going to reach Ivor's lab.

The siblings ventured on. It was silent and eerie, save for the sounds of bats squeaking and the occasional groans of zombies coming from inside the maze. As the siblings continued, they couldn't help but to admit the Farlands were indeed strange. Stranger than all of the stuff they've seen so far, which admittedly wasn't a high bar.

After a couple of minutes or so of walking, Jesse yelped as a spider suddenly appeared out of nowhere. It hissed furiously, leaping forward and tackling him down onto the ground. With some effort and help from his sisters, he was able to pry the spider off him and once it was off, he slashed it with his sword, making it fall over the edge. Once they were out of safety however, his sword shattered.

"Shit!" Jesse scowled. "You've got to be kidding me!"

"So much for the stone sword," Nikki teased.

"Oh, hush!" Jesse huffed. "Let's keep moving."

Without another word, the siblings pressed on. At this point, Jess started to lose hope. She doesn't know exactly how long they've been walking, but it felt like it's been hours. And yet, they're not even close to Ivor's lab. As she let her eyes wander onto the ground below, she noticed the rest of the team disappearing somewhere down below.

"Olivia!" She called in hopes she would hear but instead, was met face-to-face with a witch. She giggled devilishly, pulling out a splash potion of harming. Before she had the chance to throw it however, Zephyr swiftly flew up, screeching loudly. The witch instinctively covered her ears and as she was distracted, Jess pulled out a bow and arrow, aiming carefully and shooting an arrow at her.

The arrow flew like a bullet across the air and hit her forehead. The impact made her fall down into the maze and to her demise. The siblings cringed as they heard her body collide with the ground, but they were relieved to see they were now safe. For now.

Nikki scratched the back of Zephyr's ears lovingly as the team silently moved on. Jesse tried to tell himself that they were close, but not even he was too sure. It could also be that he was just telling that to himself so he could give himself false hope that they were actually going to find the super weapon and save the world. His thoughts were interrupted when Nikki spoke up.

"Huh. What's that?" She asked. She was gazing at what seemed to be the end of the maze, where there was a chest, crafting table and some strange machine. It didn't seem like much but it could be useful to them.

"Let's find out," Jesse replied, starting to hop down the broken wall to reach the grassy floors. His sister followed after him and once they were at the very bottom, Nikki took a quick glance at where the grass blocks ended, spotting the dark depths below. It seemed like a black void and she didn't even want to imagine what would happen if someone fell down there. To make matters worse, there was no bridge or anything to help them get across.

"Okay. I don't see a way across," she murmured.

"Then I guess we have to build one," Jesse figured before glancing over at his middle sister. "Just don't fall next time, okay Jess? Unlike Soren's fortress, I'm not sure this one has a floor."

"Shut up," Jess scowled, rolling her eyes at the remark her brother said before deciding to go check out the chest. Her siblings on the other hand decided to observe the strange machine.

"Hmm.. redstone blocks, some pistons.." Jesse murmured. "Wonder what this thing's supposed to be."

"I dunno. Aren't you the one who's supposed to be Ellegaard's protege?" Nikki teased, her brother giving her the stink eye in return.

"What do you see there, Jess?" Jesse then asked.

"Just some Redstone dust and slime," Jess replied as she approached. "Maybe this thing is supposed to, I dunno? Help us get across the other side?"

"How?" Nikki asked. "This old thing is never going to work!"

"It may be broken, but that doesn't mean we still can't fix it," Jesse encouraged before shifting his gaze back onto the machine. "If only we could figure out how this thing is supposed to work.."

"Yeah, I don't think machines like this come with building instructions or blueprints, Jesse," Nikki huffed.

"Hello? Anyone?" A new, familiar voice called and the siblings quickly whipped their heads around to see Olivia and Reuben stepping out of the maze.

"Olivia, is that you?" Jess beamed.

"Jess! There you guys are!" Olivia smiled as Reuben oinked blissfully, glad to see his owners were okay. "I thought I'd never find you! Any of you guys. All those dead ends back there.."

Jess smiled as she threw her arms around her friend, pulling her into a tight hug. "Am I glad to see you guys!" She rejoiced. "That maze was so big.. I thought we'd never find each other!"

Olivia giggled as she returned the embrace. "Us too. I thought Reuben and I would be lost in here forever!" She agreed.

"Where's Chris, Soren and Gabriel?" Nikki then asked, breaking the moment between them. As the two parted, Jesse rubbed Reuben's head as he oinked, nuzzling his head across his leg.

"They're still inside. I guess Reuben and I were fortunate enough to find the other side," Olivia replied before her smile dropped. "This maze.. we don't have time for this." They then began to trot towards the edge. "Who even knows where the others are by now?" Reuben oinked fearfully. "I mean, the clock's ticking here, guys. Yet we're lost in some elaborate puzzle."

"Well, at least we're back together," Jesse encouraged. "And we'll find a way through this."

"Yes! The dream team reunited!" Jess beamed. Reuben oinked joyfully to match her energy and even Zephyr flew down to his animal counterpart as he squeaked happily.

"And now the dream team's just gotta find a way across this gaping bottomless pit," Nikki acknowledged. "Any ideas?"

Jess thought for a moment before gazing at the machine. "What about this thing?" She asked. "Could it get us across?"

The party of six, including Reuben and Zephyr approached the machine. Olivia scanned it carefully before answering. "It's some kind of flying barge," she observed. "It would probably get us to the other side.. but it's in really bad shape. And it's really complicated."

"You can fix it though, right?" Nikki inquired.

Olivia looked unsure. "I don't know.. I think it's out of my league." She then scratched the back of her neck nervously. "I wish I had more time to study with Ellegaard. She could've fixed this thing right up."

"C'mon, you'll figure it out," Jesse tried to encourage her. "You know you always do."

Olivia was hesitant, but she gave in. "Fine. I'll take a look.." she said. As she observed the machine, Jesse gazed over at the maze. The others were still in there and he couldn't bring himself to leave them trapped inside while he, his sisters and Olivia were safe.

"While you guys do that, I'll go see if I can find the others," Jesse said before gazing down at his younger sister. "Nikki, you coming?"

"You bet!" Nikki grinned.

"I'm sure you and Olivia have it covered?" Jesse gazed over at Jess, who simply nodded in response. "Great. We'll meet you back once we find the others."

"Goodbye, you two!" Jess called as her siblings disappeared inside the maze. She then gazed over at Olivia, who seemed puzzled and doubtful.

It's not like it's her first time fixing a machine, but she doubts that she'll ever find a way to fix it. She was trying her best but every time she tried to think, she would be reminded of Ellegaard and how she treated her harshly because of her poor introduction. Olivia frowned. She couldn't even stand in front of her idol without fainting. What makes her think she'll be able to fix a machine like this?

She tried to put her thoughts aside, trying to see if she could find a way to repair it but was left stumped. She felt embarrassed that although her friends trusted her to fix it, she wouldn't be able to complete the task. She was letting everyone down.

"This layout doesn't even make any sense! What was Ivor thinking?" She grumbled under her breath in frustration before sighing and sitting down, the cold truth hitting her. "Or maybe it's just me. I mean, Ellegaard herself said I don't have what it takes to be a great engineer. She was right. I just-.. can't hack it." She then curled up into a ball, squeezing her knees. "I might as well be a carrot farmer.."

Jess silently sat next to her. She felt a wave of sympathy wash over her as she stared up at the machine before gazing over at her friend. "Ellegaard didn't know you," she encouraged. "Not the way I do."

"But Jess.. she was the greatest redstone builder - ever!" Olivia protested as she stood, facing her back towards her friend. "She was in the Order of the Stone!"

Jess stood up as well. "Sure, but the Order are still people - just like us," She pointed out.

"Right.. just like us," Olivia scoffed before she gazed over at her. "I mean, how are we the ones saving the world when they don't even have what it takes? What makes you think we're better than them? Or if we could get passed high-level stuff like this? Jess, I appreciate you trying to be there for me but you have to open your eyes." She then crossed her arms. "Not everything is going to be rainbows and cupcakes. This is reality, not a fairytale."

"But Olivia-"

"Save it. Look at us! Soren and Ivor are always at each other's throats. The 'greatest warrior in history' doesn't remember his own name. All I ever see Magnus do is argue. And we both know what happened to Ellegaard," she listed. A moment of silence rested between the two for a moment before she went on. "If the Order can't do this - how are we supposed to? We're not even at the legal age for drinking. This is way out of our league.. we're nobody.."

"All I know is, the world is depending on us," Jess reminded her. "If the Order can't fix this. Then maybe someone else is destined to."

"Then maybe the world is in trouble. Whoever this 'destined' person is, it's sure not going to be us," Olivia huffed. "I mean, they defeated an Ender Dragon. They became heroes. Can you name even one thing we've done right? And I don't mean managing to stay alive.. something that actually matters."

"Well, for starters, we finally won that building contest at EnderCon. We rescued Petra from the WitherStorm. We got Gabriel back. We even brought the Order back together again," Jess listed as she gave her a comforting look. "You and Jesse found Ellegaard, Axel, Nikki and I found Magnus.. We both played a role with Soren. And we survived through the impossible just to make sure that our world will see the light of day again."

Olivia couldn't help but to admit she was right. Her words replayed in her mind for a moment before she took a deep breath. "..Yeah, I suppose that's true.." she admitted. "But you, Jesse and even Nikki did most of the work. You guys lead. You.. were brave. While I just sat there, fainting in front of Ellegaard.."

"We were all there together. We protected one another. This whole thing has been a group effort," the brunette encouraged. "Even if you think you did so little, everything we did, everything we went through all affected where we are now." She then threw her arms around her, resting her head on her shoulder. "We've been through so much together, Olivia. I don't

even know where I'd be if I didn't meet you that day. No matter what happens, thick or thin, I'll be here by your side. Remember that."

Olivia felt her eyes water slightly as her friend's words replayed in her mind. She slowly returned the embrace, her hands shaking as they rested on her back. "Y-Yeah.. I suppose that's true. I wouldn't know what I'd do without you either, Jess," she choked, attempting to push back her emotions but failed as tears fell down her cheeks. As they did, her eyes fluttered shut, holding onto her friend desperately as if her life depended on it.

After a few moments, her eyes fluttered back open. She glanced over at the broken machine once more, a wave of motivation overwhelming her. She sniffled, wiping the rest of her tears away before separating from the hug. "Alright. I'll try one more time," she said. "Thanks for everything, Jess, I-.. I really mean it."

"No," Jess shook her head, a proud smile stretching across her face. "I should be thanking you."

Olivia returned the smile before once again approaching the machine. She examined it carefully before kneeling down, her mind racing with thoughts as she tried to glue the pieces together. When she finally got to a conclusion, her eyes widened slightly as she stood.

"Wait a second.. I think I see what he was trying to do.." she murmured before glancing over at her friend, handing a couple items to her. "Jess, take this piston. Craft it into a sticky piston, then place it on the other side of the barge, along with a redstone block. You got all that?"

"I think so," Jess nodded.

"Good. It's best if you try to hurry up as best you can. The sooner, the better."

Jess nodded before approaching a crafting table that was conveniently placed there. She at first began to dig through the chest next to it, collecting some redstone dust and a slime ball. Bingo! She then stood in front of the crafting table and began crafting the needed items. She crafted the redstone block first before crafting the sticky piston and once she was done, she joined her friend by the machine.

"Okay - let's put the redstone block where it's supposed to go, and place these pistons," Jess muttered to herself. She tried her best to help her best friend repair the machine, placing the redstone block and sticky pistons in their needed areas. Olivia did most of the work, wiring the

redstone, fixing its structure and making sure everything was put into its correct place. Once she was done, she stepped a few steps back, admiring her work.

"Holy shit! We did it!" She boasted.

"I knew you had it in you," Jess smiled.

Olivia blushed slightly, her heart fluttering as she returned the grin. "Thanks for believing in me," she said. "We need flint and steel to get it started!"

"I think Jesse still has a pair," Jess thought before shifting her gaze towards her with an excited expression. "I'm proud of you, Olivia!" She threw her arms around her for a second time, Olivia at first being surprised by this before returning the hug.

"Thanks, Jess. I know I already said this but.. thanks for everything you said before," she admitted. "It really helped."

"No problemo!"

The two separated from the hug before performing a high-five. As they celebrated, Reuben sniffed the ground before oinking urgently to gain their attention. The two noticed this, worriedly gazing at the exit of the maze until right on cue, they heard familiar voices.

"It must be this way.." Gabriel's voice called.

"Hurry!" Chris urged.

"Everyone! Follow me!" Jesse ordered. The rest of the team came running out of the maze, Jesse, Gabriel and Nikki all holding their weapons. Zephyr was leading them, safely guiding them towards the other side. At first, Jess and Olivia were both confused why everyone seemed so fanatic until they spotted the large zombie horde trailing behind them. Reuben oinked in surprise and fear, realizing the danger they were in.

"Everybody get on!" Jess ordered. "Quick, onto the barge!" As everyone raced for safety, Jess faced her older brother. "Jesse! Give me your flint and steel!"

Jesse at first was confused, but nothingness, he tossed the flint and steel towards his younger sister. Jess hopped up and caught it before lighting the barge. As it activated, she leaped inside, the machine beginning to move forward. They were now back on track!

"That was close!" Jesse panted. "Everyone okay?"

"I suppose at this moment in time," Chris agreed. "Still a bit befuddled but.. I suppose everything is fine."

"Yeah, what he said," Nikki commented.

"Wait.. I remember something!" Gabriel suddenly spoke. "Didn't Ellegaard build a machine like this once?"

"Yes, in the Nether," Soren nervously confirmed.

"And you were terrified of flying on it!"

"What? Stuff and nonsense!"

"No, no, I'm positive!"

"Actually, I recall Ellegaard informing me about one of your adventures," Chris giggled. "She stated that you suffered from so much through Acrophobia, Magnus used to purposely get you nervous about high places, even if the trip didn't include any."

"Arop-what now?" Nikki inquired.

"Fear of heights. Y'know high places, buildings, any of the above," he then thought for a moment. "We could hardly see the ground up here, I wonder what might be lurking down here. Or what happens if you hit the ground.. if there's a ground at all. You might just be falling through a black void."

"Not helping!" Soren squeaked.

Jess found his reaction hilarious. "Soren, is that true?" She giggled.

"Of course not!" The ginger huffed, but yelped in fright as he took a peek of what was down below them."

A laugh bubbled out of Gabriel's lips. "Well, I suppose I might be mistaken," he teased.

"Totally mistaken," Chris laughed.

"I liked you better when you had amnesia," the ginger whined.

Once they reached the other end, Nikki was the first to hop off and onto solid land. Everyone else followed after her. The floor below them was made from oak wooden planks. Soren looked extremely relieved, wiping the sweat from his forehead. Gabriel meanwhile dusted himself off, scanning their new surroundings before grinning and facing the rest of the team.

"Well. That was exciting," he commented.

"By 'exciting,' I assume you mean 'absurd and unpredictable,'" Soren corrected.

"At least we accomplished getting here," Chris said, trying to lighten the mood. "It's better than nothing."

"Barely," Nikki groaned. "Zombies are now becoming my new pet peeve."

"Hey, at least the smell didn't follow you, sis," Jess teased. "Back there, I swear everyone smelled like fish and rotten flesh."

"Haha, so funny," Nikki huffed, crossing her arms.

"Excuse me, we still have a mission to finish," Jesse said, interrupting their conversation. "Let's go see what he's hiding in there."

◦●●◉✿ Chapter 2: Ivor’s Cottage ✿◉●●◦

Without another word, the team pressed forward. They climbed up the stairs and approached the iron doors. It was the only entrance inside the house. Once inside, the team entered what resembled a huge laboratory. It was hard to see, glowstone blocks barely lighting the way for them but despite this, the siblings and Olivia noticed it had the same vibe and style as the libraries from Ivor's basement and the Order Temple.

"So many books!" Gabriel observed.

"It's best to be alert," Chris pointed out. "We haven't got a clue what might be lurking here."

"Chris has a point. This place could be booby-trapped!" Olivia agreed. "This is Ivor's literal home we're talking about."

"How are we going to find the book?" Jess questioned. "There's no possible way Ivor can be THAT paranoid to place booby-traps in his own home. We already had to walk miles, go through some maze and fight a bunch of monsters just to get here."

"I wouldn't be surprised if there were booby traps," Nikki admitted. "It seems like everyone in the Order is super weirdly paranoid." She wasn't wrong. This entire time, they had to go through pretty intense stuff just to reach the Order. From fighting in a TNT competition to get Magnus to dodging Endermen to reach Soren.

"Let's just start looking for the enchanting book," Jesse said. Nodding at once, the team split up, heading off in their own directions. They all kept their eyes peeled so they could at least have some sort of clue as to where the enchanting book was. Jesse however scowled a little, wishing Ivor hadn't disappeared so he could just point to where it is.

"Geez, I wish Ivor was here," he admitted. "Would've gotten things moving way faster."

"We'll find that thing eventually, Jesse. It has to be here somewhere," Jess encouraged.

"I hope you're right.."

Jess approached a bookshelf, squinting her eyes a little so she could read their titles. "A brief history of Cubism.." she read out loud. "Crafting for Noobs, Revised.. A Collector's Guide to Precious Gems.." She then frowned. "None of these are enchanting books."

She then shifted her gaze from the bookshelf, to Chris, who was just standing alone in a corner with his arms crossed, reflecting through his thoughts. Curious and wanting to see how he was doing, Jess approached him. When the little kid noticed her approaching, he uncrossed his arms and shifted his gaze towards her.

"Hey Chris," Jess greeted. "Having any luck?"

Chris pondered on the question for a moment before shaking his head. "No. I apologize for not being the best I can, however I can't help but to deliberate on other matters," he revealed.

Jess raised an eyebrow curiously. "Stuff such as..?" She asked.

"You know. Gabriel. Ellegaard. People dying, getting WitherSickness and amnesia," he listed, however he was only partially telling the truth. "I deeply apologize for my concerns. I'm overly delighted I joined you, I just-.. I'm frightened for everyone else's safety. Their safety.. as well as ours."

"How are you recovering from.. y'know," Jess inquired, not wanting to bring up Ellegaard's passing. Despite this, Chris knew what she was talking about.

"I-.. don't know," he admitted. He turned his back towards her, crossing his arms. "I thought I'd spend the rest of the journey moping around, but.. I can't help but to feel.. empty. Like something is missing. I don't know." He crossed his arms. "I haven't got a clue.."

"I think it's part of grief," Jess guessed. The little boy gazed over at her with a confused expression. "People grieve differently. Not everyone would burst out in tears as soon as they lost something or someone."

"How would you know?" Chris challenged.

Jess paused before taking a deep breath and answering. "Well, I-.. lost my dad a long time ago. I'm not sure if he's dead or.. ran away or just abandoned us, but.. all we know is that he's gone.." she revealed. As she spoke, she tried her best to push her own emotions aside in order to comfort the little boy. "It was.. hard. I didn't think we'd even make it but.. we had each other

Chris' eyes widened in shock, feeling a wave of guilt wash over him. "I-.. I had no idea.." he murmured. "I'm so sorry.."

"No no it's okay. Don't apologize!" Jess assured him. She took a deep breath before continuing. "Y'know, I think you're great company, Chris. The fact that you've already gone through so much yet still think about others.. It says a lot." She gave him a warm smile. "Ellegaard would be so proud of you, Chris. Even if she isn't here, she'll always live in your heart."

Chris' dark eyes began to water as her words replayed in his head. Without a word, he pulled the folded photo from his pocket, unfolded it and stared into the picture the photo depicted. It was a photo of himself when he was younger and Ellegaard. Even though they weren't close, she still kept the memory of him close to her.

Tears ran down his face as Jess threw her arms around him, giving him the comfort he needed. "Shhh, it's okay.." she consoled. "Let it all out.."

After a minute, Chris sniffled as he wiped the tears falling from his eyelids and tried to plaster on a straight face, however it was difficult to do so. "I-.. thanks for everything, Jess," he cried, pulling her into a tight hug.

Jess almost felt like crying herself but she managed to keep her composure. Once they finally separated, she gave him one last comforting expression. "If you need some time alone, I'll be happy to give you all the time you need," she said. "Call if you need anything."

Chris thought for a moment before gently nodding his head. "Of course.." he murmured. "If you're wondering about the enchanting book, it's not present in this area. I already checked."

"Okay. I'll-.. keep searching," Jess sighed before eventually taking her leave. Before she could get very far however, she bumped right into Olivia. "Olivia-! Hey. Any luck?"

Olivia raised an eyebrow skeptically before answering. "Not really. Ivor has too many books, and there's too few of us looking," she answered. She then gazed over at Chris nearby, her eyes sparkling in concern. "What happened?"

"Chris-.. is having trouble dealing with.. you know what," Jess answered honestly, however a frown rested on her face. "He just needs some time alone."

"Oh.." Olivia frowned. "I feel bad for him. He just watched as his own cousin got killed in front of him. If that were me, I-.. I don't know what I'd do.." She then groaned in frustration. "How did we end up all split up like this? I feel like we're spreading ourselves too thin. And now, Ellegaard's gone. It still doesn't feel real." She crossed her arms as she remensiant about the good old days. "I miss how things used to be. That first night we all spent together with Axel and I moved into the treehouse? That was.. really fun. But now.."

"Yeah. I wish Lukas was still here," Jess admitted, missing the blonde's company.

"Me too.." Olivia agreed. "He's smart. I liked having him around. Even if.. we weren't on the exact right terms."

Jess looked around their surroundings for a split second before coming closer. "And.. he has excellent hair," she giggled.

Olivia chuckled. She never found attraction towards men, but she couldn't help but to admit her friend was right. "He does have good hair, doesn't he?" She scoffed playfully. "See? This is why we get along so well."

"What is this, I hear? Olivia simping for men for the first time?" Jess teased.

Olivia rolled her eyes in a playful manner. "In your dreams," she huffed.

Jess laughed at her reaction. "Okay, I'm going to keep looking," she said. "Call if you need anything."

Olivia nodded before shifting her attention back onto the search, looking through a bookshelf. Jesse and Nikki were nearby searching for the book. Nikki had already started growing impatient and even Jesse's starting to grow a little fed up. They've been searching for what felt like hours. And plus, Ivor's laboratory seems huge. Would it really be here at this exact place?

"This is stupid," Nikki huffed as she crossed her arms. "We've been here for-.. how long? How could we be sure the book is really here?" Zephyr squeaked, the small EnderBat nodding his head in agreement. He had been flying around and observing every book in the room, yet none of them was the book they were looking for.

"Well, Ivor isn't here so we've got to scout out this place bit by bit," Jesse pointed out, however he was mainly saying that to keep his hopes up. "Who said this would be easy?"

"I'm not saying it would be easy, I'm saying it's frustrating that there's no point where we don't have to worry about monsters or endless searching," the young girl scowled as she crossed her arms. "We're basically sitting ducks. The others are still there where the WitherStorm is. What if something bad happened without us knowing because we're stuck here?"

"Nothing bad is going to happen. Not on my watch," the brunette vowed, his stomach filling up in guilt at the thought of the possibility. He still didn't like being separated from the rest of the team, especially knowing the dangers they found themselves in. It would at least comfort him to know that they are safe. He was just about to continue but froze when he noticed Soren standing nearby, looking pissed. Curious, he cautiously approached him.

"Find anything yet?" He inquired.

"In this mess? It's as though Ivor learned nothing from my lectures on organized methodology!" The ginger complained. The two siblings shared awkward looks as he went on. "If only he hadn't gotten lost in that confound swamp.. he could just tell us where the book is! Coming here was HIS idea. He should be here for it!"

"He can be pretty stupid for someone so smart," Jesse figured.

"Yes! And this house is a perfect example!"

"I don't find it fair to blame Ivor," Nikki frowned, defending the brewer. "None of us are sure what exactly happened back there."

"Yeah, all that we know what happened is that he completely abandoned us," Jesse scoffed, his younger sister giving him a small glare.

"Even if Ivor isn't to blame, my point still stands," Soren scowled. "There's no rhyme nor reason to how these books are stored. Finding anything here is impossible!"

"Tedious, maybe. Impossible - no way," Nikki encouraged.

"Really-?" Jesse commented.

"Shut up!"

Soren pondered for a moment before grumbling. "Fine. I will continue this monotonous search. But I will reserve my right to grumble about it," he sighed.

The ginger turned his attention back on the search. Or rather, more specifically shulking in the corner. He was beyond annoyed and outraged about the situation they found themselves in, however he couldn't help but to feel some sort of remorse. Every time he would try to push it away, it would only come back to taunt him.

He knew exactly what was the source of this intense remorse. It hurt and it wasn't fair. Even when he tried to mask it, he knew deep down that he couldn't shut those feelings away forever. And he had a feeling that Ivor might know about this feeling too. And not just Ivor..

"You guys find anything?" Jess inquired as she approached her siblings.

"Nothing useful, no leads, nothing we could use to track down that enchanting book," Jesse frowned.

"We've been here for hours," Nikki once again complained. "Y'know Soren had a point before. If Ivor was here, we would've been in and out no sweat!"

"Listen, we just got to keep our heads high if we're going to find that thing," Jesse said.

"How high is higher?"

"Reuben-!" Jess suddenly called, alerting her siblings from their conversation. The siblings twisted their heads around, spotting the piglet sitting by a fireplace. He seemed to be relaxing, resting his muscles until they had to walk out into danger once more.

"Reuben, what are you doing?" Jesse inquired, cautiously approaching the young piglet. Reuben pulled himself up from the ground, grinning contentedly as he oinked. "Yeah, well, you're going to get yourself cooked. I've told you before; stay - away - from lava." Reuben bowed his head in dejection before scoffing and slowly slumping over to sit at a nearby chair. Jesse frowned, crossing his arms. It felt like everyone was upset with him over something.

"Don't take it too seriously. I bet he's just-.. tired," Jess comforted, noticing how gloomy her older brother looked. Jesse wasn't too sure but decided to take her word for it. His attention was soon grabbed when he noticed Nikki staring at Gabriel, the warrior carefully inspecting potions sitting upon an empty bookshelf. Curious, he cautiously gazed over at him as well, Jess having the courage to approach him.

Gabriel was scanning the potions, finding something.. familiar about them. He couldn't exactly wrap his head around it. "This Ivor character.. I'm recalling that he knew something about potions," he said, feeling her presence. A small sense of hope loomed over him as he imagined a potion that might heal his amenia. A potion that will turn him back to normal. Or at least stop the WitherStorms from raging. He gazed over at the siblings. "Could one of these stop those Wither monsters? I'm remembering correctly, am I not?"

"What do you remember?" Jess inquired.

The warrior thought for a moment before responding. "I seem to recall that Ivor was.. better with potions than people.." he said. "And he-.. he.."

"Keep going..."

He tried to think of anything else but nothing else came to mind. It felt as though the memories were there, but they kept running away from him. As if it was a fearful rat and he was the fierce cat trying to chase it down. He groaned in frustration. "Nothing else is coming. Besides the whole Ivor-being-a-jerk thing," he moaned in defeat. He twisted his attention back onto the bookshelf, beginning to read. "Potions of blindness.. potion of dullness.. potion of nausea.. none of these will help me." His frown deepened as he once again faced the teenager. "Jess, am I going to be alright? Or is this just.. who I am now? Always struggling to remember what I was.."

"Don't worry - we're going to find a way to fix you," Jess assured him, giving him a small, comforting smile. "You, and Petra, and everyone else the WitherStorm affected."

"But to do that, you'll need to destroy the Command Block, will you not?"

Jess froze. He was right that they needed to destroy the Command Block, however she wasn't sure how they were going to do so or even how they're going to get to the command block if they find the enchanting book but they are going to find a way. She knows they are going to find a way. "So that's exactly what we'll do," she said bravely.

Gabriel felt a little surprised. This young teenager was willing to do anything to help save the world. Even if she or anyone else gets killed in the process. So young yet so brave.. It almost reminded him of someone. "You never stop fighting," he said before he smiled warmly. "I admire that."

Jess smiled in response before giving him a look of determination, nodding her head. She was just about to reply, but was cut off when she heard Nikki calling out for her and Olivia. She twisted her head around, noticing her siblings gazing at something between the walls right in front of the fireplace. Or.. lava place. Curious, she joined them, wondering what they had found. Olivia and Chris followed after her.

"What's up?" She pondered.

"Glad to see you could make it," Nikki joked. "I think there's some redstone over here. Zephyr spotted it while you were talking to Gabriel." Zephyr squeaked in pride, holding his tiny head up high.

"Geez, congratulations," the brunette joked.

Olivia approached the tiny breach in the wall, inspecting it for a moment before speaking. "Looks like a circuit. We probably just need a lever to power it," she said.

"We wouldn't need to craft a new lever. Because luckily, I have this lever from like, a long time ago," Jess grinned, proudly pulling out the lever she crafted back in Petra's cave. She placed the lever next to where the breach was, the redstone inside immediately being activated.

"Like it was made for it!" Nikki gloated.

"Which it was," Jesse beamed, nudging her playfully. As everyone gathered around, he slowly approached the lever. "Let's see what this sucker does.." When he flickered it, at first everyone was disappointed when nothing happened. Suddenly, they all flickered as stone blocks blocked the source of the lava, making it slowly melt away.

Once the lava was gone, the blocks continued to move until a staircase was formed. It was dark and felt uninviting, leading down to dark depths below. Jesse felt as though this staircase might lead them straight to hell. Everyone stared at the new-found staircase in bewilderment, an eerie silence looming across the room as no one dared to say a word.

"A secret passageway.. hmm," Gabriel said, breaking the silence.

"Why would you spend time building a restricted corridor in a place nobody would stop by?" Chris inquired, perplexed.

"Right? Seems like a stretch if you ask me," Jesse agreed.

"More like, why WOULDN'T you?" Jess corrected, a rush of adventure and excitement drowning her. "Secret passageways are cool!"

"Good point."

"First dibs!" Nikki beamed, bolting down the stairs on impulse. She didn't think of what might happen, mostly fixated on what might be lurking at the bottom of the staircase. Zephyr flew above her, squeaking nervously as he tempted to get her to stop but she wouldn't listen.

"Nikki! Get back here!" Jesse scolded as he, Jess, Soren, Chris and Reuben bolted down after her. Olivia and Gabriel were just about to follow behind, but unluckily for them, Nikki ended up stepping on a tripwire hook, the door closing behind them. The team froze and gasped, realizing once again they've been separated.

"What the-?!" Jess yelped, clapping her hands over her mouth as she pressed her hands against the enclosed wall. "Are you guys okay?"

"We're fine! But the lever isn't working anymore!" Olivia answered, flickering the lever repeatedly. The door wouldn't budge.

"What do we do?!" Chris panicked.

Jesse gazed over at Soren, who shrugged in response before speaking. "Stay there. We'll head down and see what we can find," he instructed, though he felt a heart pit in his stomach at the thought of being separated once more. Without another word, the team ventured down the rest of the staircase. The further down they went, the darker it got. Luckily, Soren had a torch so they could see where they were going and once they finally got to the end of the staircase, the siblings all gasped in awe.

◦●●◉✿ Chapter 3: Puzzles and Treasures ✿◉●●◦

They were now in a dimly lit room with iron block walls and floors, sacred and rare treasures being displayed. It resembled a kind of treasure room, something the siblings never thought they'd actually get to see in person.

"Incredible! He's gathered them all in one place!" Soren chuckled, grabbing their attention. A wave of nostalgia washed over the ginger as his eyes scanned the room around them.

"Gathered.. what, exactly?" Jess questioned.

"The treasures of the Order of the Stone!" Soren revealed. He excitedly hurried to the other side of the room, gazing over at each one of the treasures being displayed. "The stories I could tell about these dusty old things.." His smile fell as he stopped in front of the Ender Dragon egg, a wave of remorse hitting him.

"So I was correct! We're in a treasure room. Ellegaard.. had one back in Redstonia," Chris recalled, grabbing the ginger's attention. "She contained all her lavish inventions and discoveries there." He then seemed confused. "I'm curious as to why Ivor would have one down here?"

"I thought a treasure room would look way more.. extravagant," Nikki huffed, finding the place to be way more eerie than extraordinary. "I don't see any enchanting books though.."

"Maybe through there?" Jesse suggested, pointing at two closed iron doors. It was hard to tell what was on the other side, the open windows on the door showing nothing but pitch blackness. Soren approached the doors. He scanned them for a moment before banging on them, attempting to open it. The doors didn't budge.

"Locked. Of course," he groaned.

"There must be some way to open it," Jess coaxed. It was like solving another puzzle. Something she admittedly wasn't the best at but they still had to try.

"Such as?" Chris inquired, hoping that they'd find something. No one responded, simply giving each other nervous and perplexed expressions.

After a moment of silence, Nikki approached one of the sacred treasures. One that was shaped like a tear. "These Ghast Tears.. they're super hard to get!" She fangirled.

"You don't know the half of it," Soren chuckled. "It was our first mission as the Order of the Stone. We fought those ghasts for hours.. and these tears were our reward." The siblings and even Chris were impressed by the story. Nikki was just about to grab the ghast tear but she was stopped by Soren. "Nikki, what are you doing?"

"Uh.. taking this really cool rare item?" The young teen answered. "We might need it to unlock that door."

"What makes you say that?" Jesse raised an eyebrow.

"Ivor wouldn't leave these items here for nothing! They got to be, I dunno.. a clue?"

Jesse thought for a moment before giving in. For once in a while, his younger sister had a point. Soren gave in as well, however he still seemed a little nervous. "Very well.. just be careful with it," he said.

Nikki removed the ghast tear from its display, the pressure plate below it not doing anything. She grinned, gazing over at her siblings. "See?" She bragged.

Jesse rolled his eyes in response before approaching the Sea Lantern that was sitting just in front of where the Ghast Tear was displayed. It was the shade of dark teal and shined so brightly that he squinted his eyes a little to avoid being blinded by the light.

"Am I crazy, or is this a Sea Lantern?" He asked in awe.

"Ah! The very same one the Order built, all those years ago! We were so green back then.." Soren recalled. "It looks just as bright as on the day we crafted it."

"A Sea Lantern, huh?" Jesse said, taking the bright glowing block and placing it in his inventory. As the siblings continued to inspect the remaining treasures, Chris couldn't help but to feel a little suspicious. Of course, it was incredible how Ivor managed to preserve the Order's treasures, but he was confused as to why Ivor would have them in the first place. He cautiously approached the ginger, hoping to find an answer to his questions.

"Soren-? If you don't mind, why does Ivor have the treasures of the Order of the Stone? Did he steal them?" The teenage boy inquired.

"No no no. We-.. let him keep them. When we split up," Soren revealed sheepishly.

Chris' eyes widened at the discovery and couldn't help but to feel his suspicions raise. "You LET him keep your treasures?" He repeated. "Why would-."

"Frankly, Chris, it's a long story," Soren interrupted. "Something I'd rather not get into."

Chris frowned. Deep down, he felt like Soren was hiding something important, but to be fair, Ellegaard was always keeping many details about the Order private from him and even Soren and Ivor seemed to have a long history. Not even Mini knew a lot about their history. If anything, he knew that he should always trust his gut instinct and something deep down is telling him that something is wrong.

"These are Prismarine Crystals," Nikki marveled, distracting him from his thoughts. "You can only get these underwater, right?"

"Precisely! We nearly ran out of oxygen getting these!" Soren confirmed. He then chuckled. "Ellegaard had to use a spare bucket just to grab a few extra breaths. We used most of these to craft a Sea Lantern. This is all that remained."

"Prismarine is such a cool word," Jess grinned as her younger sibling took the shards sitting on the display. "Prizzzzzzmarine." She then focused her attention on the item sitting opposite to the shards, revealing a thick block of ice. She approached it, eyeing it curiously. "Packed ice. I've only ever HEARD of this stuff."

"So where'd this Packed Ice come from?" Jesse inquired, gazing over at Soren.

"We brought it back from the Ice Spikes biome. It was colder there than anywhere we'd ever been - but Magnus slipped so many times, our laughter kept us warm," the ginger reminisced. "After that, we knew we were ready to face the Ender Dragon!"

Jess carefully took the ice from the display, cringing slightly by how freezing it was. "Ooooh - cold!" She said, "And slippery."

As Jess gently placed the block of ice in her inventory, making sure it didn't fall out of her hands, Jesse slowly approached the last remaining treasure in the room. It was a large egg, being pitch black with dark purple spots. Zephyr flew above it, eyeing it carefully as he squeaked in commiseration. Jesse didn't notice as his eyes shot wide.

"No WAY! Is that what I think it is?" He gasped. "Soren, is this the actual Ender Dragon egg?!"

"Atlas.. yes. The only thing that remains of our final adventure together," Soren revealed, however he couldn't help but to frown as memories rushed back to him. Guilt and remorse washed over him and it even felt like it was taunting him.

"No way I'm leaving this behind," Jesse beamed. As soon as he took the egg, the iron wall dropped behind Soren and Reuben, revealing five hoppers in a row on the other side. Jesse approached it with a grin, his sisters following behind him. "Aha - a hopper!"

"Why is Ivor hiding a hopper in his basement?" Soren wondered.

"Similar as to why he would add an inconspicuous corridor earlier," Chris shrugged.

"Looks like a regular hopper," Jesse observed, kneeling down to take a better look at the hoppers. "..that's hooked up to a bunch of Redstone circuitry."

"How do you know that?" Nikki raised a brow.

"Just a hunch," Jesse shrugged as he stood back up. "I saw hoppers like these back in Redstonia. Man, Ivor sure does love his puzzles."

"Hmm.. five slots," Jess murmured. "Okay, so there's definitely a puzzle. How are we going to solve it?"

"Just a little advice. Usually in puzzles, the clues are always there," Chris said. "You just have to think things out and connect them together."

"The clues are always there, huh?" Jesse repeated, intrigued. He stared at the five hoppers for a moment before speaking. "Jess, Nikki? Can you guys give me all the treasures real quick?" Both his sisters seemed confused but they did as he said anyways, giving the treasures they had over to him. Once he had everything, Jesse began to think. The five hoppers were numbered. Maybe that had something to do with the puzzle?

He then realized one thing. Numbers! Maybe the stories went in order? He placed the Ghast Tear above the first hopper No reaction. Maybe it WILL react once he finishes the puzzle? One by one, he placed the treasures in order, keeping the stories Soren told them in mind. He placed the Prismarine Shard in the second hopper, then the Sea Lantern in the third, the Packed Ice and finally, the Ender Dragon Egg. Once he was finished, the items flew inside the hoppers, the iron doors flying open. The puzzle was complete!

"Yes!" Jesse cheered.

"Good job, Jesse!" Jess rejoiced, both her and Nikki giving their older brother a tight embrace. Reuben oinked happily, rubbing his head against his leg. Chris was proud as well, watching the siblings celebrate with a grin.

"You solved it? But how in the world did you know what order to put them in?" Soren said, surprised and puzzled. "There were one hundred and twenty possible combinations!"

"Everything I needed was in your stories!" Jesse revealed. He then gave Chris a small smile. "Chris gave me the push I needed. I just connected everything together." Chris' smile widened at this.

"Nice work, Jesse," Soren congratulated, impressed. He then turned his back on the teens, his mind once again wondering about the good old days. "I often give Ivor a hard time.. But for all his complaining, his time with the Order clearly meant a great deal to him."

Chris hung onto every word. He once again began to wonder once more about the Order's relationship with Ivor. Why was it so secretive? Why was Soren so reluctant to talk about it?

"Yeah, I guess so," Nikki said, sounding less interested in the topic. "Anyway.. let's go get that enchanting book!" She then began to approach the iron doors, the rest of the team following behind. As soon as they stepped on the other side, their eyes widened in astonishment at what was awaiting them. It felt like they stepped back inside the End, or at least a replica of it.

There were obsidian pillars that resembled the very same ones they saw in the End with a large statue of the Ender Dragon, its tail and body circling the room. Purple and gold redstone lamps lit the way for them and the team was so taken aback by it that they could hardly speak.

"By the stars.. the Ender Dragon!" Soren marveled. "With replica Ender Crystals and all!"

"Wow. I always speculated what it looked like," Chris gasped.

"You and I both," Nikki agreed.

The small group ventured deeper inside the room. As Jesse let his eyes wander around the room, he spotted another set of iron doors. He assumed they were locked, but through the small windows, he saw a purple glow that illuminated the room inside.

"Hmmm.. no way out," he murmured.

"Soren.. what's this thing supposed to be?" Jess inquired, puzzled as to what the room could be for exactly.

"It appears to be a homage to our battle with the Ender Dragon," Soren theorized. "Despite his anger, Ivor never stopped being fond of us. He was a big part of our team, after all. He knows his days in the Order were his finest."

"And these are supposed to be the Ender Crystals?" Chris queried, scanning the lit redstone lamps sitting upon the obsidian mini towers. Each one of them had a different banner.

"Scale models of them. They were the secret to the Dragon's demise."

"The secret, huh?" Nikki repeated, intrigued. "Maybe you should tell us the whole story."

"Nikki.." Jesse scolded, his younger sister huffing as she crossed her arms.

"No, it's alright! If only you'd only been there.. it was a fight for the ages!" Soren reminisced. "We'd spend weeks preparing for our greatest battle ever." As he spoke, the teenagers all imagined the vicious battle. "But even so, the Ender Dragon was stronger than even I had imagined. I realized that it was drawing strength from the Ender Crystals - and that the crystals had to be destroyed. I hit the first with a perfectly placed arrow."

Soren hid behind an Obsidian tower, keeping himself hidden from the Dragon. He pulled out his bow and arrow and carefully aimed before shooting. The arrow flew through the air like a bullet and came in contact with the Ender Crystals. It immediately got destroyed in a small explosion.
"The second, I destroyed by launching myself on the shockwave of Magnus' TNT."

Magnus pulled out a lit TNT block, tossing it in the air. Soren hopped right on top of it, the shockwave sending him backward toward the second Ender Crystal. It was destroyed immediately and its explosion sent him forward and onto the Dragon's neck. Magnus down below cheered at the victory.

"Using only my strength and my wiles, I steered the foul beast toward the third crystal. I flew the Dragon directly toward the final crystal!"

Soren did his best to keep himself steady as he rode the dragon. As the dragon tried to shake him off, it accidentally destroyed the third crystal. Ellegaard nearby wired dispensers powered by redstone, an array of arrows shooting forward. This helped to keep the Dragon under control, leading it to destroy the final crystal. Once all the work had been done, Soren hopped from the Dragon as it began to collapse back onto the ground.

"Only then did Gabriel deliver his famous final blow."

Gabriel cautiously approached the creature's body and whacked, or to be more accurate, nervously tapped it with his sword. Afterwards, the Dragon was defeated, exploding into nothing with little remains. After they were finished, the team cheered in victory.

"We became heroes, and eventually, legends," Soren concluded. "The greatest the world has ever known."

"You.. did all that?" Nikki gasped.

“Indeed I did.”

"That was absolutely AMAZING!" Jess gushed, the teens sharing the same amusement.

"They didn't call us the Order of the Stone for nothing," the architect chuckled. "Anyway, I'll see if I can find some clues on how to get that door open."

After the exchange, the teens all began to ponder. "Wonder if that story will help us solve this puzzle," Jesse wondered out loud. "Right Chris?" He gazed at the youngest teen, who seemed to be distracted. "Chris?"

"Hm-? My apologies! I was just wondering.. if the Order worked so well in the past, I could hardly imagine what happened between them," Chris frowned. "I feel like something's not adding up."

Jesse couldn't help but to realize the young child was right. He expected the Order to have a happy reunion and be able to work together to take the WitherStorm down.. yet, the moment they saw each other, they were less than pleased. Especially Magnus and Ellegaard. If they worked so well together in the past, then what changed? What tipped the iceberg? Whatever happened, he felt like Ivor was part of it.

"I was wondering that the entire time," Jess admitted. "Heck, they could hardly spend five minutes together without bickering." She thought for a moment before continuing. "You guys think it was something to do with, I dunno, drama?"

"Whatever it was, it's not going to get us closer to our goal," Nikki pointed out. "I think it's better if we focus on what's really important before we go down a trip to memory lane."

"Nikki has a point. As much as I would love to learn about what happened with the Order, we need to stay on track," Jesse agreed. He gazed around the room, starting to ponder. "So Soren rode the Dragon, huh?"

He took the story into consideration. If the previous story helped him solve the riddle before, he guaranteed that this story will be useful as well. He gazed at the mini obsidian towers, staring at the different banners that decorated each one. Each had a different symbol on it; a bow and arrow, TNT, redstone dust and a sword and below the banners were buttons.

That's when it hit him. Of course! The room was made to look like the End, specifically the battle scene between the Old Order and the Ender Dragon. Which means that the story Soren just told is the key to solving the riddle!

He approached one of the obsidian towers, the one with an arrow on it. He pushed the button causing the redstone lamp above it to flicker off. "Hmm. Interesting," he murmured.

"Thought of something, Jesse?" Nikki said, noticing him standing in front of the obsidian tower.

"Yes, actually," Jesse confirmed, his sisters and Chris gathering around him to hear what he has to say. "Call me crazy, but I think the puzzle is connected to how the Order defeated the Ender Dragon. Soren said he destroyed the first Ender Crystal by shooting an arrow at it. And then-.."

"Magnus used his TNT to take Soren up to the second Ender Crystal!" Jess said, catching on.

"If that's true, then I suppose afterwards it would be redstone," Chris speculated. "Because once Ellegaard told me that she helped steer the dragon away with arrows shooting out of wired dispensers."

"And then Gabriel would deliver his final blow!" Nikki finished. "Or something."

"Arrow, TNT, redstone, sword," Jesse listed. "I think we found what we need to finish this riddle."

"Which means all we need to do is actually finish it," Jess concluded. "By y'know, pushing the buttons."

"We know," Nikki huffed. "Let's hurry so we can get the hell out of here."

"Language," Jesse scolded.

“Sorry.”

After the exchange, the teens went right to work. They pushed the button under the TNT banner, then the one with the redstone banner and then finally; the button under the sword banner. The iron doors flung open. The teens were just about to happily celebrate their victory, but their smiles quickly faded when they noticed another pair of iron doors sitting right there.

"There's another door-?" Jess said in disbelief.

"Okay, that's just being petty," Nikki complained.

"I guess the puzzle isn't finished," Chris frowned. "We still need to finish one thing."

He was right. They needed to finish one more thing to complete the puzzle. Jesse knew this and tried to think of a solution. Something that will help them complete the puzzle. That's when it hit him. Of course! Soren said he RODE the dragon. They saw the statue of the dragon which meant that they had to physically go ONTO the dragon to complete the puzzle. Just one problem. How were they going to do that?

"Hey, what's this?" Nikki's voice came. Jesse snapped his attention to his younger sister, seeing that she was standing underneath a redstone lamp that shines blue. He, Jess and Chris joined her, inspecting the redstone lamp carefully.

"I dunno. Maybe it's our next clue?" Jess suggested.

Jesse noticed obsidian right by the lamp. His eyes trailed to where the obsidian was going, noticing that it was connected to the dragon statue. It might be some kind of tail. That's when everything clicked. "Yeah, Jess might be onto something," he hinted, gaining their attention. "Soren said he rode on the Dragon's back. Maybe if we somehow get up there.."

"Then that'll be where we'll find the last clue!" Chris finished, showing more excitement than he did before. The sisters shared surprised expressions before once again facing their older brother.

"That's good thinking but how are we going to get up there?" Jess pointed out. "I'm not keen on making a human ladder.. and that's way too high for any of us to jump on."

"There are some things that could be impossible. This isn't one of them," Jesse encouraged. "Maybe we could get a boast from Reuben?"

"OR Zephyr could fly one of us up," Nikki added. "I'll do it!"

"Are you sure?" Jesse said, skeptical on letting his younger sister go up on her own. "It might be dangerous. I could do it instead."

"That dragon is all the way up to that roof," Nikki huffed. "You might hit your head if you try going up there. We don't need you to lose any smart brain cells. Besides, nothing bad will happen. Chill out, I'll be fine."

"Yeah, Jesse none of us have the money for a funeral for your good brain cells you lost for nothing," Jess agreed, crossing her arms as Nikki giggled. "And could've been avoided. We'll need the good brain cells if we're going to find that enchanting book."

Jesse huffed as he crossed his arms. Nikki was right. He would need to crouch down to avoid hitting his head against the ceiling above them. They couldn't waste anymore time so he gave in. "You two love fucking with me, huh?" He scowled before sighing. "Fine. Stay safe, okay?"

"Language!" Jess gasped, using Jesse's words against him, which received her a glare from her older brother.

Nikki bursted out laughing at her brother's reaction before approaching the dragon's tail. Or below it to be more accurate. She took a deep breath before gazing over at her pet EnderBat, who was ready to follow any commands. "Zeph, give me a boost, will ya?" She asked. Zephyr nodded his tiny head, grabbing the hood of her hoodie. He lifted her up into the air, dropping her down on the base of the tail.

Everyone else watched her as she carefully trotted from the tail, making her way towards the head. Once she arrived, she noticed a lever sitting at the back of its head, almost as if it were waiting for her. "Aha!" She beamed, flickering the lever. The doors immediately flung open, opening their access for the room inside!

"Bravo! You did it!" Soren rejoiced. Zephyr squeaked happily, bringing his owner back down onto solid ground as the rest of the team celebrated their victory.

"We did it!" Jess squealed. Even Chris shared the same excitement, happy that finally they will acquire the one thing needed to take the WitherStorm down. He still had a bad feeling, but he tried his best to push it aside.

"There's the book!" Jesse exclaimed, the team bolting towards the room. They expected to see the Enchanting Book inside. The solution to all their problems. However, when they entered inside, their excitement quickly faded. Their eyes shot wide as their jaws dropped as their eyes landed on the things inside the room. Even Reuben and Zephyr were stunned at the scenery.

◦●●◉✿ Chapter 4: The Truth Revealed ✿◉●●◦

Sitting behind the lectern that held the book they needed were ten purple square crystals with red symbols on each of their sides, white aura surrounding them. They glowed brightly as they bounced above obsidian, which held them in place. Chris swore she saw these crystals before in books. In fact, they were the same crystals the Ender Dragon used for regeneration. Zephyr squeaked, recognizing the glowing crystals instantly, which gave Chris the clear confirmation.

"Wait.. aren't those the Ender Crystals..?" He finally said, breaking the silence. He faced Soren, his eyes as wide as they could go. "Like - the real ones-?"

"No.. it can't be.." Soren murmured, his voice quavering as he approached the glowing crystals. "Not here. Not after all this time!"

"That's impossible! Those things were destroyed in your big heroic battle with the Ender Dragon.. right Soren?" Jess questioned, finding her voice.

When she noticed the architect hesitating, Nikki scowled as her brow furrowed. "Well?" She chastised, approaching the ginger. "Soren, what the hell is going on?!"

"Hey, let him talk," Jesse interjected, pulling his younger sister away before she could do anything. "I'm sure there's a logical explanation for all of this." He then shifted his gaze towards Soren. "Soren..?"

Soren didn't answer. He simply stared at the glowing purple crystals. "He kept them.. the fool actually kept them!" He finally said, ignoring the teens as he paced in a circle. "He looked me in the eye and swore.. he was going to dispose of them!"

"Soren.. How did these get here?" Jesse inquired, keeping a calm tone as he approached the ginger. "I mean, you can't just MOVE Ender Crystals.. right..?" When he noticed the ginger once again hesitating, his eyes narrowed.

"This isn't.. this isn't what it looks like!" Soren shuddered, backing away slightly. "Our story - the story - it's mostly true! I swear! I swear it! Whatever any of you are thinking.. I promise, I can explain!"

"Then what IS this?" Chris challenged. "Could you care to explain what you mean by 'mostly true?' What are you hiding?"

"Yeah, what REALLY happened, Soren?" Jess added. "If you didn't destroy the Ender Crystals.. and I'm pretty sure it's impossible to CRAFT Ender Crystals.."

"I-I can't.." the ginger said. "We swore never to speak of it.."

"I think it's time to start talking," Jesse demanded, crossing his arms.

Soren sighed, refusing to meet their gazes. "I'm afraid I haven't been honest with you. All of you," he admitted. "We did defeat the Ender Dragon. But it wasn't-.. exactly like I said."

"How 'not exactly?'" Jess pondered.

The architect turned his back on them, bowing his head as he rested his hands on the edge of the obsidian holding one of the crystals. "We got rid of it.. but we.. we didn't kill it, per say," he turned his back towards them. "In fact, we didn't even fight it. We didn't even try.."

"So what DID you do to it?" Nikki huffed, starting to get impatient.

"We didn't do anything!" He finally blurted, raising his voice. The teens flinched by his sudden tone as he continued. "We used that damned Command Block!"

"You USED the Command Block to defeat the Ender Dragon?!" Chris repeated. The teens were in disbelief. After all this time.. after all these years..

Soren bowed his head, unable to face them. "..I'm afraid so.." he confirmed. "Understand - when I found that blasted block, we were nobodies. But with its help, we became stronger. Faster. We could do so much more!"

He remembered the scene like it was yesterday. The feared expressions his friends had when they arrived at the scene. The loud roars of the Dragon replayed in his head.

"The others had no idea what I was doing.. Yet the more I used it, the more we came to depend on it. I knew it was only so long before someone would find out."

The screams of terror from his friends came back to him. The dragon swiftly flew around them, breathing out purple flames. They were petrified, hiding behind Soren in fright as he pulled out the glowing Command Block. As the dragon swooped down to land a blow on them, the Command Block began to glow. It was so bright that it blinded them.

Once the dragon approached, it disappeared in thin air. The Command Block made the beast vanish. When his friends realized what had happened, they faced him. He could never forget the faces of shock and horror they gave him.

"So I concocted a plan. I would use the Command Block to blink the Ender Dragon out of existence.."

The loud cheers of the crowds of people cheering for them played in his head. After convincing his friends to play along about their supposed 'great deed.' They held their heads up high as they were praised, waving and forcing smiles. All except Ivor, who gave Soren a nasty glare as he clapped heavily. This wasn't one of approval, rather it was one of disdain.

"Securing our status as legends.. forever."

Once he was finished, the teens were all bewildered. None of them didn't know what to say, only staring at the ginger in disgust. Someone they used to look up to as a hero. Someone they thought would be the one thing to help fix their problems turns out to be a fake. They wasted their time on fraud.

"We told the world we defeated a dragon," Soren concluded. "And the rest.. is history."

"Soren.. you cheated. You WORSE than cheated. You're a fraud!" Chris spluttered before the siblings could say a word.

"Believe me.. I know."

"Soren, I looked up to you," Jesse muttered, unable to see the ginger the same way. "The whole world did. Are you telling me that all of this, everything written about the Order.. was just something to boost your popularity?"

"Is this why you suddenly started being busy so goddamn much?!" Chris shouted, tears streaming down his face. The siblings flinched slightly, waves of sympathy washing over him as they watched. "Mini used to say how much you weren't around. How much it hurts whenever you failed to be there when she needed you most-? She NEEDED you! She looked up to you! Are you not ashamed-?!"

"Nobody is more ashamed than me.." Soren murmured. He couldn't find the strength to face him.

"So you finally admit it," a new, familiar voice came. The party of five shifted the entrance, spotting Ivor, Olivia and Gabriel there. Olivia and Gabriel were just as shocked as them, making it clear that they were listening the entire time.

"Soren.. how could you..?" Olivia gasped, clapping her hands over her mouth.

"Ivor.." Soren hissed.

"How long have you guys been standing there?" Jess questioned.

"Long enough that they heard the whole thing," Ivor revealed.

"So we're liars..?" Gabriel murmured, his voice cracking. "All of us..?"

"You didn't think you could keep it secret forever, did you Soren?" Ivor challenged as he approached the ginger. "The truth hurts, doesn't it?"

"But Ivor.. why..?" The architect muttered.

"Is this why you left the Order-? Because Soren lied?" Jess asked, putting two-in-two together. She wrapped her arms around Chris, wiping his tears and giving him the comfort he needed.

"Because.. they all did!" Ivor revealed. "Soren, Gabriel, Magnus, Ellegaard.. they agree to keep this a secret!"

"How conniving of us.." Gabriel frowned.

"And YOU! You agreed to stay quiet too!" Soren caterwauled. "In exchange for all our treasures!"

Olivia gasped at the discovery. Ivor pressed his lips together in disagreement before once again speaking. "I've technically never told anybody," he pointed out. "Our guests of honor discovered the truth on their own."

"So this whole thing.. the Wither you unleashed.. it's all been to teach the Order a lesson?" Olivia said, summing everything up.

"To teach the world a lesson! To show you who the Order really are," Ivor corrected. "Liars. Cowards. And now, they know."

"Yes, I suppose they do.." Soren sighed.

"Well, it worked," Jess frowned. "Now we know the truth."

"I'm failing to understand something. How is THAT any better?" Jesse challenged. "You reveal their lies, at the expense of people's lives? At the expense of the world itself?"

"And if we don't deal with that WitherStorm that YOU created, Ivor, none of it will matter!" Nikki added. "Was it worth the effort? Seeing countless lives being lost, seeing many cities and land being destroyed to ruins?"

Ivor didn't answer her question, his eyes flashing in guilt. "Look, my Wither plan obviously backfired," he said, turning his back on them.

"Ya think?!" Olivia scowled.

"I didn't know we'd end up with three of those things tearing the world apart!"

"For a moment, I nearly forgot.." Gabriel lamented.

"Well, we ARE! And while we sit around talking about your dysfunctional relationship with the Order of Liars, those things are still out there wrecking everything!" Nikki chided.

"Which brings us back to why we're here. We need to destroy that Command Block.. Like now!" Jesse added.

"Nikki and Jesse are right. Destroying the Command Block is all that matters anymore," Soren agreed.

Ivor at first remained quiet before speaking. "How ironic that the best thing the Command Block gave us was the very means to destroy it," he said. He approached the enchanting book and closed it. The cover looked similar to the Command Block.

"Spare us the poetry. It's not your strong suit," Soren rolled his eyes.

"I've had this book for years," Ivor went on, ignoring him. "Never thought I'd actually have to use it."

"Let's just get on with it and put that enchanting book to work," Jess replied. "We're wasting time here!"

"Agreed. Just follow me. I'll show you what to do," Ivor said. He gave Jesse the enchanting book and was just about to lead them to where they needed to go until Soren spoke.

"Ivor.." he said in a stern tone. Ivor shifted his gaze towards him, expecting another lecture. Soren's gaze softened as his eyes flashed with remorse. "I'm sorry. About everything.."

Ivor felt a warm feeling in his stomach, though he tried to keep a composed demeanor. Even after all he's done, he couldn't bring himself to hate him. "Yes, well.. it doesn't matter now," he murmured. He tried his best to push his emotions aside, leading the team into a large room. This one had a chest, crafting table and anvil with multiple armors being displayed. "Grab some ingredients and craft a weapon. I'll show you how to enchant it."

"Sweet," Jesse beamed. "Let's see what Ivor's got in there.." He then approached the chest, opened it and began to dig through it.

"What do you see, Jesse?" Jess inquired.

"Let's see. There's a bunch of crafting stuff, and.." he muttered. His expression brightened as he pulled out a similar blue gemstone. "Diamond! Score!"

"Hey, save us some!" Nikki beamed, she and Jess digging through the chest to collect their own materials. Jesse let them have at it, approaching the crafting table. He took two diamonds, placing one on the third column and one right below it. He placed the final Diamond he took in his inventory, saving it for later. Afterwards, he placed a stick below the diamonds. It did the rest on its own, crafting a sword. He grinned, giving it a test swing.

"Awesome! I've never owned a Diamond weapon!" He beamed.

"Just wait til you enchant it!" Ivor grinned. He led him to the anvil, once again repeating the instructions. Jesse placed his sword down, placing the enchanting book next to it. The items merged, the sword glowed brightly, any brighter than any normal enchantment.

"Behold: my enchanted Diamond sword," Jesse gushed, holding the sword up high for everyone to see. Reuben oinked excitedly, hopping up and down.

"Geez, we get it show off," Nikki said teasingly as she and Jess came over to observe the new weapon.

"Yes, that should do the job nicely," Ivor said. He then shifted his attention towards Jess and Nikki. "I may not have another enchanting book, but I do have enchanted swords. They may not be as strong as the super-weapon, but they might bring some use to you." He handed the sisters their own enchanted sword each, the both of them seemingly satisfied with their new weapons.

"But if you're fighting those Wither monsters head on.. you'll want better armor too." He gestured towards the displayed armory. "I enchanted these for the Order. They're about as strong as it comes. Even to withstand TNT!" He gazed over at the siblings. "Any preference? Jesse, I don't think that suit will last you any longer."

Nikki beamed as she rushed forward to pick something from the armory. Jess, Olivia and Chris quickly followed behind her. Nikki picked Star Shied, the white and blue armor fitting her perfectly while Jess ended up choosing Dragonsbane, pulling off the black and purple armor surprisingly well. Ivor expected Jesse to choose new armor as well, but was perplexed when he noticed him nervously standing at the side.

Jesse noticed this, scratching the back of his neck nervously. "I kind of want to keep the armor I'm already wearing," he said sheepishly.

"Really?"

"I mean, Ellegaard died so I could have it, you know? It seems disrespectful if I switch it out for something else."

"Come to think of it, she would've liked that," Ivor figured, an ocean of remorse drowning him. "Very well.."

"Nice weapon, Jesse!" Olivia complimented.

"Thanks!" Jesse grinned.

"We should at least take some for our friends, right?" Nikki suggested. "I mean, we've been gone for weeks. It wouldn't hurt to bring an early Christmas present for them for the final showdown."

"Sounds good to me!" Jess agreed, Olivia and Chris nodding their heads in agreement.

"Okay, go on. Don't take your sweet precious time," Jesse urged. "We still need to bid the WitherStorm one last goodbye." They then split up to collect armor and weapons for their friends. Once they were satisfied, they headed out the iron doors, heading back into the room where the Ender Crystals were. Soren and Gabriel sat outside waiting for them, standing back up as they began to head for the exit.

"Now let's get back to Soren's fortress and see how the WitherStorms are doing against those Endermen," Jesse declared. The team held their heads up high with determination as they left the room. They prepared for the long journey back to Soren's fortress, all of them wondering how the others were holding up. Finally, they have true hope that this nightmare is going to end. Now, it was time for the final showdown..

◦●●◉✿ About the Author ✿◉●●◦

Hello, I'm Isabella, Izzy for short! Just your average teen making fanfics about her favorite shows and stuff LOL. I'm in a shit ton of fandoms and I'm interested in starting new fanfics outside of MCSM. This includes:

MCSM ⚔️ (I will stay in the fandom until I die)
Avatar, the Last Airbender/Legend of Korra 🌊🪨🔥💨
Heathers (mostly the movie) ❤️💚💛💙
The Owl House 🦉
Amphibia 🐸
MLP 🦄
Voltron 🪐
Precure 🪄
The Babysitters Club (graphic novels only) 👶🏽
Winx Club 🧚🏽‍♀️
Sofia the First (kinda) 👸
Ever After High 🧚🏽
Monster High 👾
Royale High 👑
Rainbow Magic 🧚‍♂️
The Ghost and Molly McGee 👻

I also ship a shit ton of stuff like McSawyer, Jesstra, Jetra, Lukesse, Sashannarcy, Lumity, Raeda, Huntlow, Klance, Rarijack, Flutterdash, Twipie + Sunset. A lot more that I'm too lazy to list lol. I also include OC's.. if that's fine with any of y'all, I love adding OC's 😭😭 I hope y'all enjoy my stories and have a wonderful day:D

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